

In the Claims:

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12 and 13 are amended herein. Claims 4 and 10 are canceled. New claims 14-17 are added. The remaining claims are not amended in this response.

1. (currently amended) A lithography mask blank comprising a substrate, having a shape of a substantially rectangular parallelepiped, of which the upper surface has a pattern region substantially at the center thereof and a peripheral region, wherein the pattern region and the peripheral region are in one plane, wherein the lithography mask blank consists of said substrate and a frame having a shape of substantially rectangular parallelepiped, which are fixed to each other.

2. (currently amended) A lithography mask blank comprising a substrate, having a shape of a substantially rectangular parallelepiped, which has a lower surface provided substantially at the center thereof with an opening and a self-supporting membrane having a pattern region substantially at the center of the upper surface thereof corresponding to said opening, wherein the pattern region and a peripheral region around the pattern region are in one plane, wherein the lithography mask blank consists of said substrate and a frame having a shape of substantially rectangular parallelepiped, which are fixed to each other.

3. (original) A lithography mask blank as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the entire lithography mask blank is integrally formed.

4. (canceled)

5. (currently amended) A lithography mask blank as claimed in claim ~~[[4]]~~ 1 or 2, wherein the fixing positions of said substrate with said frame substantially correspond to the reference points of a mechanism for fixing the transfer blank in a pattern writer or a cassette for housing the lithography mask blank.

6. (currently amended) A lithography mask blank as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 through 5~~ claim 1 or 2, wherein the lithography mask blank is a blank for a charged-particle beam lithography mask.

7. (currently amended) A lithography mask blank as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 through 5~~ claim 1 or 2, wherein the lithography mask blank is a blank for an X-ray lithography mask or an extreme ultraviolet beam lithography mask.

8. (currently amended) A lithography mask comprising a substrate, having a shape of a substantially rectangular parallelepiped, which has a lower surface provided substantially at the center thereof with the opening and a self-supporting membrane having a pattern region substantially at the center of

an upper surface thereof corresponding to said opening, wherein said self-supporting membrane is provided with through-holes of a mask pattern in it or an absorber or scatterer of a mask pattern on it, and the pattern region and a peripheral region around the pattern region are in one plane, wherein the lithography mask consists of said substrate and a frame having a shape of a substantially rectangular parallelepiped, which are fixed to each other.

9. (original) A lithography mask as claimed in claim 8, wherein the entire lithography mask is integrally formed.

10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) A lithography mask as claimed in ~~any one of claims 8 through 10~~ claim 8 or 9, wherein the lithography mask is used as a charged-particle beam lithography mask.

12. (currently amended) A lithography mask as claimed in ~~any one of claims 8 through 10~~ claim 8 or 9, wherein the lithography mask is used as an X-ray lithography mask or an extreme ultraviolet beam lithography mask.

13. (currently amended) A lithography wherein a mask pattern is transferred by using a charged-particle beam, X-ray, or extreme ultraviolet beam with a lithography mask comprising a substrate, having a shape of a substantially rectangular

parallelepiped, which has a lower surface provided substantially at the center thereof with an opening and a self-supporting membrane having a pattern region substantially at the center of an upper surface thereof corresponding to said opening, wherein said self-supporting membrane is provided with through-holes of said mask pattern in it or an absorber or scatterer of said mask pattern on it, and the pattern region and a peripheral region around the pattern region are in one plane, wherein the lithography mask consists of said substrate and a frame having a shape of a substantially rectangular parallelepiped, which are fixed to each other.

14. (new) A lithography mask blank as claimed in claim 3, wherein the lithography mask blank is a blank for a charged-particle beam lithography mask.

15. (new) A lithography mask blank as claimed in claim 5, wherein the lithography mask blank is a blank for a charged-particle beam lithography mask.

16. (new) A lithography mask blank as claimed in claim 3, wherein the lithography mask blank is a blank for an X-ray lithography mask or an extreme ultraviolet beam lithography mask.

17. (new) A lithography mask blank as claimed in claim 5, wherein the lithography mask blank is a blank for an X-ray lithography mask or an extreme ultraviolet beam lithography mask.